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SPEAKE NOMINATION

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON THE

NOMINATION OF THERESA ALVILLAR-SPEAKE, NOMINEE TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MINORITY ECONOMIC IMPACT, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

JULY 27, 2001

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THERESA ALVILLAR-SPEAKE NOMINATION

FRIDAY, JULY 27, 2001

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in room SD–366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel K. Akaka presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL K. AKAKA, U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII

Senator AKAKA. Because this is a special meeting here, I want to say hafa adai to all of you, and aloha. The hearing will come to order. I welcome our guests, our witnesses to this hearing, particularly those of you who have traveled from Guam.

Our hearing this morning is on the nomination of Theresa Speake to be the Director of the Office of Minority Economic Impact at the Department of Energy, and on two bills pertaining to Guam. They are H.R. 308, the Guam War Claims Review Commission Act, and H.R. 309, the Guam Foreign Investment Equity Act, and we will begin this morning with Ms. Speake's nomination.

Without objection, Ms. Speake's written statement, her committee questionnaire and her financial statements will be entered into the record.

Ms. SPEAKE. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Senator Feinstein wanted to be here to introduce you to the committee but had to catch an airplane to California. That is halfway to Hawaii. She has provided us with a written statement which, without objection, we will enter into the record.

Ms. SPEAKE. Thank you.

[A prepared statement from Senator Feinstein follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DIANNE FEINSTEIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to welcome Theresa Alvillar-Speake and say a few words to introduce her to the Committee.

Ms. Alvillar-Speake has been nominated by the President to be Director for the Office of Minority Economic Impact in the Department of Energy. This is the office that advises the Secretary of Energy about the effects of policy on minorities and minority business enterprises.

In her previous position as the Manager of Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Programs for the State Department of Transportation, Ms. Alvillar-Speake served the people of California well.

She has had over twenty-five years of extensive administrative experience in business development and community outreach efforts.

Before serving with the California Department of Transportation, Ms. Alvillar-Speake was Assistant Director of Business Relations for the California Employment

Development Department for three years. Prior to that, she served with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and at the U.S. Department of Commerce from 1991 to 1993 as the Assistant Director for Program Development in the Minority Business Development Agency.

In 1992, Ms. Alvillar-Speake founded a non-profit Minority Business Development Center called the National Economic Development Association to help ethnic minority owned business with financial development, construction assistance, and management advice. She started the organization in Fresno and soon centers spread statewide.

She is a member of the Fresno County Fair Board of Directors and has served on a local bank's Community Reinvestment Act Advisory Board.

I am happy to see the President nominate someone from California's central valley—the heart of our State's and our nation's agricultural economy. Ms. Alvillar-Speake represents the strength and diversity of the region well and it will benefit the Department of Energy to have her experience and perspective.

Ms. Alvillar-Speake is a graduate of Fresno State University and received a MBA from Golden Gate University in my hometown of San Francisco.

I would like to welcome her to the Committee and I wish her well.

Senator AKAKA. The rules of the committee, which apply to all nominees, require that nominees be sworn in in connection with their testimony, so I ask you to please rise and raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Ms. SPEAKE. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much. You may be seated.

Before you begin your statement, I will ask you three questions addressed to each nominee who will appear before this committee. Will you be available to appear before this committee and other congressional committees to represent departmental positions and respond to issues of concern to the Congress?

Ms. SPEAKE. I will.

Senator AKAKA. Are you aware of any personal holdings, investments, or interests that could constitute a conflict of interest or create the appearance of such a conflict should you be confirmed and assume the office to which you have been nominated by the President?

Ms. SPEAKE. My investments, personal holdings, and other interests have been reviewed both by myself and the appropriate ethics counselors within the Federal Government, and I have taken appropriate action to avoid any conflicts of interest. There are no conflicts of interest or appearances thereof to my knowledge.

Senator AKAKA. Are you involved, or do you have any assets held in a blind trust?

Ms. SPEAKE. No, I do not.

Senator AKAKA. We are delighted to have you here.

Ms. SPEAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator AKAKA. Do you have any members of your family here?

Ms. SPEAKE. Unfortunately, my family is all in California. I have three children, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, so I am going to miss them, but I know that they are here in spirit. I do have some friends here with me today.

Senator AKAKA. Well, you are blessed, with a family like that.

Before you begin your statement, Ms. Speake, I want to tell you that we are delighted to have you here and look forward to your testimony, so will you please proceed with your statement?

TESTIMONY OF THERESA ALVILLAR-SPEAKE, NOMINEE TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MINORITY ECONOMIC IMPACT, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Ms. SPEAKE. Thank you.

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Theresa Speake, and I have a few remarks that I would like to make this morning, and as has been mentioned, my written statement. I would request that it be entered into the record, and I thank you.

I am here today as the President's nominee for Director of the Office of Minority Economic Impact at the Department of Energy. If confirmed, I will be responsible for advising the Secretary of Energy on the impact of energy policies, of regulations and rules as they affect minorities, minority businesses, and minority institutions.

I think it's important to note that I spent most of my life, almost all my professional career, working in the field of minority business development. I began my career with the National Economic Development Association, NEDA, in Fresno, California, in 1972. I worked with that organization until it closed down its operation in Fresno in 1980.

In April 1981, because I felt that the need for continued services to minority and women business was still there, I started up a new venture called NEDA San Joaquin Valley, because we were located in the San Joaquin Valley. The NEDA San Joaquin Valley operated from 1981 until 1997. During that time, we assisted thousands of individuals reach their American dream of business ownership, and we provided technical assistance to many people.

We also assisted hundreds of firms receive millions of dollars in funding and bonding, which are critical to small business growth. We also assisted firms to become certified and to bid successfully on contracts, and to provide—that provided products and services both within the public and private sector.

I spent most of my career promoting opportunities for small, women, and minority-owned businesses. I was selected as the—in 1980 as the Woman Business Advocate of the Year in the State of California, and in 1990 I was awarded the National Minority Business Advocate of the Year by the Minority Business Department Agency.

If I am confirmed to the position of Director of the Office of Minority Impact, I will strive to continue to provide equal opportunities for minorities, and to increase the participation of minorities in contracting opportunities at the Department of Energy. I propose to do this with the advice of the Secretary of Energy, this committee, other members of Congress, and the minority business community.

I am honored to be here today, and I look forward to working with you. Thank you. I will answer any questions the members of the committee may have for me at this time.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Speake follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THERESA ALVILLAR-SPEAKE, NOMINEE TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MINORITY ECONOMIC IMPACT, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is my honor and privilege to testify before you today as the nominee of President George W. Bush to the position of Director of the Office of Minority Economic Impact at the Department of Energy.

If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with the Secretary of Energy in carrying out the statutory duties of the Office of Economic Impact and in advising the Secretary on the effects of energy policies, regulations, legislation and other actions of the Department on minorities, minority business enterprises and minority educational institutions.

I would like to briefly discuss with you my credentials for the position and my thoughts on how I plan to make the program work for those it is intended to serve—women and minority businesses.

I have been involved in the area of small and minority business development since the early seventies when I went to work for a national business development organization known as the National Economic Development Association (NEDA). NEDA was organized in California to assist Hispanic individuals and business owners and was initially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration to operate eight business centers. They later obtained funding from the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) in the Department of Commerce and moved their headquarters to Washington, D.C. I started my career in December of 1972 as the Administrative Assistant in the Regional Office in Fresno, California. I moved up the ladder in the organization becoming a Market Analyst in 1975 and the Director by 1978. In 1980, NEDA closed down its national operations including the Fresno Regional Office.

In April of 1981, I founded NEDA San Joaquin Valley, a California business development organization, based on my observation of the continued need for management and technical assistance services to small, women and minority individuals and business owners. NEDA started with one office in Fresno, California and over the next sixteen years opened up centers in Riverside, Bakersfield, Tulare, Stockton, Sacramento, Oakland and San Francisco. Our services were provided to all ethnic minorities, women and small businesses. The goal of the organization was to start and expand the number of minorities in business. The type of services provided included business structuring, loan packaging, bonding assistance, certification services, contracting/procurement assistance and general management/marketing assistance.

As the Director of NEDA, I worked closely with the U.S. Small Business Administration to ensure that firms got 8 (a) certified for federal contracting purposes, and with local, state and federal government agencies to obtain those certifications and to ensure the participation of minority firms in their contracting opportunities. I also developed working relationships with the private sector, including Pacific Gas & Electric, Southern Cal Edison, So-Cal Gas, Metropolitan Water District and Lawrence Livermore Laboratories. Additionally, I established working relationships with financial institutions such as Wells Fargo Bank, Washington Mutual Bank and the Bank of America.

Each NEDA office worked closely with the Associated General Contractors to promote contracting, joint-venturing and/or mentoring opportunities between majority prime contractors and minority sub-contractors. NEDA was also active with various minority, women business and trade organizations including, but not limited to, Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE), the Latin Business Association (LBA), California Black Business Chamber of Commerce, the California and U.S. Hispanic Chambers of Commerce and the Women Construction Owners & Executives (WCOE).

As the Director of NEDA, I was selected as the Women's Business Advocate for the State of California in the 1980's and as the National Minority Business Advocate in 1991.

From July of 1997 through June of 2001, I worked for the State of California continuing my efforts in support of small and minority business development. My last position in California was the Director of the Small and Disabled Veteran Business Program for the Department of Transportation.

I have dedicated my professional life to promoting equal opportunity for all particularly in the area of business development. If confirmed by the Senate, it is my intent to continue this effort specifically with regard to promoting the increased participation of women and minorities in the contracting opportunities at DOE.

Additionally, I propose to ensure that minorities are afforded an opportunity to participate fully in the energy programs of the department and to increase the participation of women and minorities in the contracting opportunities at DOE through a variety of measures including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Increasing the awareness and sensitivity of the DOE staff to its commitment to women and minorities;
2. Increasing the pool of women and minorities in the vendor data base at DOE;
3. Providing timely contracting information to women and minority business organizations and educational institutions;
4. Providing management and technical assistance to women and minorities wanting to do business with DOE; and
5. Enlarging the range of economic opportunities available to women and minorities.

In closing, I would like to restate my feelings about the great honor I feel for being nominated by President Bush to the position and the commitment I have to serving. I truly feel that my background and experience have prepared me for this position. If I am confirmed, I will seek the advice of the Secretary of Energy, this committee and other members of Congress as I attempt to effectively discharge the duties of the position of Director of the Office of Minority Economic Impact for the Department of Energy.

Thank you. I will now entertain any comments and questions of you and your colleagues.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ms. Speake. The position to which the President has nominated you, as we all know, is very, very important and, if confirmed, you will be responsible for promoting the role of small and minority- owned businesses at the Department of Energy, encouraging greater interest among minorities in science and engineering, education opportunities, also advising the Secretary on the impacts of energy policies and programs on minorities, and ensuring that racial and sexual discrimination and harassment are not tolerated within the Department, so these are very, very important to people.

I have read your written statement, and the biographical statement you provided to the committee. I am convinced that you are a well-qualified person for this position. Your background clearly demonstrates your commitment to equal opportunity and to small and minority-owned businesses.

I have no questions for you, Ms. Speake. I will simply congratulate you on your nomination and assure you of my support.

Ms. SPEAKE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to personally thank Senator Feinstein for her written comments. I did speak with her office yesterday, and she did want to be here, and I was hoping, as a California girl, that she could, but I want to thank her very much for her written statement, and I thank you very much for letting me speak today.

Senator AKAKA. I will certainly pass that on to her when I see her next.

Ms. SPEAKE. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. All members will have until 5 p.m. this evening to file with the committee staff any additional questions they want you to answer for the record, and because we have no questions for you, we want to wish you well.

Ms. SPEAKE. Thank you very much. I appreciate your time. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Yes, thank you very much, Ms. Speake.

[Whereupon, at 9:45 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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